

An Easy Woodturning Challenge

For several years I've turned ornaments and similar small turnings to give or donate as gifts. I think that these three window candle lantern ornaments have been the most popular judging by feedback the recipients have given me. The unique LED candle insert is appreciated for its unique timed light. Once turned on, it'll burn for 6 hours then turn itself off for 18 hours then turn back on for 6 hours and repeat until the switch is turned off. Using a 2032 battery, it'll glow through the holiday season. They are also popular as night lights for the kids.

Although I've seen several similar ornaments featured on YouTube turned with 4 windows, I think the 3 window style I've been turning is unique and shows a little more style as an ornament. They can be a little bit challenging to turn but scraps of wood and a very small investment in an LED candle insert make a fun and rewarding project. Add an ornament stand and folks will display these all year.

The basics behind the 3 window ornament can be used to turn various ornaments similar to inside-out style. I've listed some drill sizes below to accommodate some different diameter turnings. You might want to try your hand at designing your own style of 3 window ornaments.

Turning a Three Window Candle lantern

1. You need a cylinder at 2" or 2-1/8 " dia. & approximately 4-3/4" length. I start with a 2-1/4" square about 5" in length. I find that will leave a slightly over 2" diameter by 4-3/4" after rounding and squaring the ends.
2. Cut a tenon in the poorer end that will become the ornaments top. You'll want the best grain and wood quality for the lamps bottom and window area.
3. Mark 3 lines at 120 degree intervals along the length of the cylinder. I use the lathe's index and the tool rest close to the cylinder as a straight edge.
4. Mark a circular line around the circumference up 1-7/8" from the cylinders bottom. Center punching the intersection of the lines helps center the forstner bit when drilling. Accuracy counts.
5. Drill the cylinder with a 1-3/8" forstner bit using a "V" block centered on your drill press. Drill just a little deeper than the center. If you marked the cylinder accurately, the holes will be equally spaced resulting in minimal difference in the web between the ornaments windows.



6. Mount your ornament back in the chuck and drill through the bottom into the globes opening. I use a 1" conventional bit. Now, Drill the bottom with a 1-1/2" forstner bit leaving a small shelf to seat the candle against. This shelf also helps when rounding the globe area so you don't separate the lamps bottom.
7. Now you turn the lantern to the shape and features desired. Use a live center in the drilled opening for extra support.
8. Lines can be burned in with a strip of wire. Be careful not to wrap the wire on your finger.
9. Turn the lantern around and mount on a jam chuck (1-1/2" tenon). Drill a very small hole into the center of the top to mount a hanging hook. Bring your live center up to support the ornament.
10. Turn off the remainder of the ornaments top tenon and finish the top's handle/post.
11. I got the LED lights from Amazon. [Amazon.com: Led Tea Lights with Timer, 6 Hours On and 18 Off in 24 Hour Cycle, 12 Pack Flickering Battery Flameless Led Tea Lights Candles in Warm Yellow for Home Decorations : Tools & Home Improvement](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B078888888)
12. I use clear silicone caulk to glue the lights into the lantern.
13. You can use an archival brush pen to add some color. Lacquer won't cause archival ink to run. [Amazon.com : Sakura Pigma Brush 8 Color Set Water based pigment with brush nib : Arts, Crafts & Sewing](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B078888888)
14. I hope all this helps.





Some help for making various 3 window ornaments.

For a 1-1/2" cylinder, drill with a 1" Forstner bit.

For a 1-3/4" cylinder, drill with a 1-1/4" bit.

For a 2" cylinder, drill with a 1-3/8" bit.

For a 2-1/4" cylinder, drill with a 1-1/2" bit.

For a 2-1/2" cylinder, drill with a 1-7/8" bit.

For a 2-3/4" cylinder, drill with a 2" bit.

For a 3" cylinder, drill with a 2-1/4" bit.